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13. — *Comparative Geography*. By CARL RITTER. Translated for the use of Schools and Colleges by WILLIAM L. GAGE. Philadelphia: Lippincott. 1865. 12mo. pp. 120.

THIS new volume which Mr. Gage has given to the public is a translation of one of the courses of geographical lectures which gave renown to the name of Ritter, as he delivered them in the University of Berlin. At the death of this distinguished man it was a matter of much regret to his scholars at home and abroad that he had left in print no systematic and comprehensive statement of the principles of a science of which he was acknowledged a chief promoter. To supply this want as far as possible, Dr. H. A. Daniel of Halle, a very competent editor, prepared and published from the manuscripts of Ritter, after comparing them with the note-books of his assiduous hearers, three little volumes which give an excellent notion of the doctrine and the style of this celebrated teacher. The first of the courses of lectures thus given to the public is a History of the Science of Geography and of Geographical Discovery; the second is a General Introduction to Comparative Physical Geography; and the third is an elaborate study of the Physiography of Europe. Mr. Gage has done wisely, in our judgment, in first translating the middle volume of this series. It is an attractive work, which fills an acknowledged gap in our scientific literature.

Many persons who took up the "Geographical Studies" of Ritter, a translation of which also we owe to the unwearied pen of Mr. Gage, laid down the volume disappointed. The fragmentary structure of these academic dissertations, and the peculiar involutions of the style, which did not wholly disappear in the English version, proved embarrassing to those readers whose acquaintance with the topics discussed was limited and elementary. Such obstacles will not be encountered in the volume before us. Unlike the essays which were written for the Academicians of Berlin, these lectures were prepared for students corresponding in attainments with those of American colleges. Consequently a systematic discussion of topics is followed, the language is clear and precise, the scope is comprehensive rather than profound, and the statement of facts is full enough for the uninformed reader, while it is not so extended and minute as to weary the attention. More than this, — the principles which are announced are so simple, so striking, and so broad, the comparisons are so sagacious and so indicative of varied learning and research, and the development of the relations which subsist between the earth and its inhabitants, though only brief, is so satisfactory, that the student feels conscious all the while that he is listening to a master.

A good text-book in physical geography, as we have intimated, has long been called for in this country. An admirable series of wall-maps, prepared with the highest scientific skill and printed with great mechanical perfection, is already circulating in our school-rooms and colleges; but the companion volumes are wanting, and we know not where a progressive teacher, unfamiliar with the German language, can look for such help as he urgently needs. Mrs. Somerville's little book is a useful compendium, but is so laden down with facts that the scholar is fatigued before he is introduced to the rudiments of the science. Dana's *Manual of Geology* contains an admirable chapter on Physical Geography, but it is only introductory to the study of geology, and is not extended enough to meet the wants of the geographical student. Guyot's "*Earth and Man*," the earliest of American books upon this subject, remains the best; but it is cast in the form of popular lectures, which is not the most appropriate for a scientific class-book. Herschel's excellent essay on Physical Geography is to a limited extent accessible in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, but it has not been republished in this country. Most of the physical geographies of the school-room evince but little acquaintance on the part of their authors with the subjects discussed, and their principal value is to excite a desire for the knowledge which they fail to communicate.

We therefore regard this book of Ritter's as likely to be of great utility in its new garb; and yet we must caution the reader against inferring from its title, or from anything which we have said, that it is an introduction to all the branches of the science which it treats of. Its range is limited to geography in its strictest sense,—to a study of the earth-surface. Hydrography and meteorology, the study of the ocean and the atmosphere, with all their important phenomena, are not included within the scope of the volume. Consequently the climate, and its influence upon animal and vegetable life, are passed by; and the scholar must look elsewhere for the knowledge which he may desire respecting the geographical distribution of plants and animals. So, too, the relations of man to the world which he inhabits, are but briefly brought out in the introductory chapter. The great problem of the influence of the material world upon the human race, to which Buckle and Draper and other recent writers have directed so much attention, is only touched upon; and the equally interesting inquiry into the conquests of man over nature, so vividly portrayed by Marsh, forms no extended part of the writer's plan in the book which lies before us.

On the other hand, the present work is chiefly an examination of the great land-features of the globe, and more especially still, of what may be termed the solid dimensions of the land. In other words, it is a dis-

cussion of the great system of upheavals and depressions, of high reliefs and low reliefs, which give to the world its varied characteristics. It is a survey of the manifold forms of the high-land, the plateau, the mountain, the low-land, the terrace, and the river, and a comparison, under these several heads, of the features of this planet. It is true that Ritter excels, and that just in these particulars this work will prove of value to geographical students in this country. More than half the volume is thus taken up with a view of what are termed the solid forms of the earth's surface. Introductory to this are a few sections regarding the various portions of the globe in their most general relations, the form of the sphere, the comparative amount of land and water, the position of the continents, the historical element in geography, and other related topics. A brief account of the horizontal or superficial forms of the various land-masses forms the concluding chapter of the work.

We trust that this analysis, although of necessity so short, will suffice to awaken the interest of all who are inclined to these new inquiries. Mr. Gage is entitled to acknowledgments for the enthusiasm which he shows in the paths he is treading, and especially in his endeavors to make English readers familiar with the results of German scholarship. The present translation, when compared with that of the "*Geographical Studies*," evinces a decided improvement. We should prefer, indeed, to have had the volume given to us with judicious editorial notes, particularly with explanations of some of the unusual and technical terms which the author employs, and with more recent information in regard to certain matters of fact than the statements of a writer now several years deceased can possibly convey. Still, Ritter alone is recent enough and good enough to delight and instruct us in a science which he shares with Humboldt the honor of establishing.

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14. — *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*. By EDWARD ROBINSON, D. D., LL. D. Boston: Crocker and Brewster. 1865. 8vo. pp. 400.

AMONG all our countrymen who have achieved distinction as explorers, none is more justly and widely honored than Edward Robinson. Indeed, there are few of any land who surpass him in zeal, industry, patience, and protracted devotion to a limited but important field of investigation. In some of his intellectual characteristics it may be thought that he is more of a German than of an American. Though good as an observer, he is even better as a scholar. He is not merely a traveller, he is the assiduous student of books. Over roads which